sugar factories to receive a subsidy amount of Rs. 412 crores from the Sugar Development Fund. In addition, about Rs. 374 crores would be available from the Banks to the mills on account of buffer stock. Thus, a total amount of Rs. 786 crores would be provided to the mills to facilitate the payment of dues to the sugarcane growers.

Rice procurement in Assam

*438. DR. ARUN KUMAR SARMA: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the support price fixed for procurement of rice and other commodities during the last three years, up-to November, 2002, indicating the agency entrusted for such purchase, State-wise;

(b) the reasons for which FCI was not entrusted to make the direct procurement in Assam as done in some other States;

(c) whether Government propose to make rice procurement in Assam only through FCI in the current financial year; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHARAD YADAV):(a) The Minimum Support Prices fixed by the Government for major agricultural commodities are unifrom throughout the country and are not fixed State-wise. The Minimum Support Prices of wheat, paddy and coarse grains for the last three years are as under:-

(Rs. Per qtl.)

Marketing Season	Wheat	Paddy		Coarse grains (Maize/Jowar/ Bajra/Ragi)
		Common	Grade "A"	
2000-01	580	510	540	445
2001-02	610	530	560	485
2002-03	620	530*	560*	485*

* In addition to MSP, the Government has approved the payment of special drought relief prices of Rs. 20/-per qtl. for paddy and Rs. 10/-per qtl. for Bajra and Rs. 5/- quintal for Jowar/Maize/Ragi during KMS 2002-03.

The FCI, in association with State Governments and their agencies like the State Civil Supplies Corporations, State Marketing Federations and State Warehousing Corporations undertake procurement operations.

(b) to (d) Procurement of foodgrains under the Price Support Scheme is in operation primarily in States/Regions which have marketable surplus. The previous experience of procurement of rice in Assam by the FCI had not been encouraging and only negligible quantities of rice were procured in the State between 1993-94 to 1996-97. Six Centres have been identified by the FCI for procurement of levy rice during the Kharif Marketing Season, 2002-03 in the Revenue Districts of Nalbari, Darrang, Sonitpur, Lakhimpur and Kamrup and action is being taken by the FCI, in consultation with the State Government, to notify the Centres. The Government of Assam has also indicated its willingness to undertake decentralized procurement of paddy/rice and has formulated a detailed proposal in this behalf. The Scheme has not been implemented so far because the formal approval of the State Government has yet to be received.

Increase in wages of workers

*439. DR. M.N. DAS: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether the daily wage workers engaged in the offices, where five-days a week working system is prevailing, are in great distress due to non-increase of their wages since a long time while the wages of the workers engaged in the offices with a six days a week system have already been increased;

(b) if so, by when their wages would be increased;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(d) when their wages were last increased?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI SAHIB SINGH VERMA): (a) The wages of the daily wage workers engaged in the offices of the Central Government located in Delhi are paid as per the rates revised by the Government of NCT of Delhi from time to time. The rates of minimum wages notified/revised by the Government of NCT of Delhi are in terms of per month and per day wages are calculated by dividing the said monthly wage figure by 26 (by deducting the number of weekly holidays from the